



The Smiling Maven

Grace for Grace (John 1:16)

חסד על חסד (יוחנן א'טו)

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This Relentless Magnificent Grace (Part II - Inclusive)¹ To the Jew first, and to the.....ah.....umm.....???

In 1991, my wife Sandy and I, along with our newborn daughter, Ruthe, moved to the Zion Faith Homes. We may not have known exactly why we made this move, but Y'shua² our teacher and Lord, is not aimless. As ministerial interns we served in various capacities. We were strongly encouraged in our personal seeking of the Lord. We were challenged to live in his kindness while living with other dear brothers and sisters in Messiah. Early in 1994, while anticipating the birth of our second child, my mind and heart began to rumble in regards to my Jewish heritage, and the possibility of the birth of a son. Unbeknown to me, though Sandy (and others) knew, there were some unresolved issues in my heart over something that had to do with Jews and Gentiles.

During a Faith Home worship meeting, I shared some words of "testimony", regarding Joseph in Egypt, and my being a Jew in a non-Jewish setting. I shared something about not feeling or being at home while living in a non-Jewish setting. I shared these things with a seemingly

deeper level of emotion than I usually expressed while speaking. Internally, I was thinking something like: "this must be pretty good stuff – I am deeply moved on the inside."

The next day I was asked to come to a small meeting. That meeting included three Faith Home ministers. It was expressed to me that there was something amiss in the words that I had shared the previous night. It had something to do with my being a Jew among Gentiles, something about my belonging to the body of Messiah, regardless of the cultural mix. My mind was defensive. I had felt deeply emotional about my statements and wanted to defend myself even attempting to use certain scriptures; yet, the unique combination of ministers along with a confirming dream, were not to be pushed aside. I was learning that sometimes spiritual growth comes at the expense of our usual thinking, even heartfelt thinking. I was given one direct instruction – spend definite, consistent, worshipful, time in the Book of Galatians, and continue to spend

time open in heart before this book.

After the meeting, sometime within forty-eight hours, I moved towards the instruction given to me and to devotional time with the Book of Galatians. There was some willingness to yield to God rather than my own ideas. I opened the Bible to Galatians and an amazing thing happened. I became stuck on the first words of the book. I am not talking about chapter one, verse one. I am talking about the title: *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians*. I looked at it, and I looked at it, and I looked at it: nine simple words, yet, potentially powerful words. Did I believe them? Did I really believe them? I sat there, or kneeled there, stuck on the title. Time went by. I knew that truly believing the title meant believing all of the title. *The Epistle of Paul*, a letter written by Paul – Paul who had been Saul, a Hebrew of Hebrews, trained as a Jew, a Pharisee, a rabbi, in every way zealous as a Jew, with a desire to follow God. He was one who had persecuted the church out of his zeal. He was the one who had been on the road to Damascus going to persecute Christians, and while on that road, Saul had a real life encounter with the resurrected Jesus. *The Apostle*, this Saul/Paul had been transformed by Y'shua and had become a leading Apostle (One that is Sent – by God). He had a right and a responsibility before God to communicate the gospel to Jews and Gentiles. As a Pharisee of Pharisees, and Hebrew of Hebrews, transformed by Jesus Himself, Paul had the qualifications and the understanding to properly convey the liberty and freedom of the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. He had the right to instruct me as a Jew in my walk with Y'shua, and in my relations as a Jew both to other Jews and to non-Jews. *To the Galatians*, there had been a struggle over these issues in the church at Galatia and this was written to address this subject. Did I believe this book was legitimate canon (divinely in-

History Questions

(Should be posted in every public school in lieu of the ten commandments)

- #1. What happened to the body of Jesus of Nazareth three days after he was buried?
- #2. Why was the tomb of Jesus empty three days after his crucifixion.
- #3. Do you really believe that the usually bumbling disciples of Jesus somehow managed to steal the body while trained Roman soldiers guarded the tomb?
- #4. Do you believe that Jesus somehow did not die on the cross, but only swooned (went into a semi-conscious state), and despite major wounds from scourging, pierced hands and feet, managed to make convincing displays (that he was resurrected) to doubtful followers only three days later?
- #5. Are there any other reasonable explanations for the empty tomb and missing body?
- #6. DID JESUS OF NAZARETH RISE FROM THE DEAD?

spired scripture) as much as any other book of the Bible? I knew that it was not for me to pick and choose what parts of the Bible to believe. To believe the word of God meant to believe this book. To believe this book meant to believe the significance of all of the title, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians*.

I sat transfixed before the title and in a sense before the Lord. Time went by. I cannot tell how much, but it was not seconds. It was minutes, maybe tens of minutes. Slowly, I acknowledged to the master of the universe that I believed the title and all that it comprised. Yes, it was a letter written by Paul. Yes, Paul was Saul who was transformed by Y'shua. Yes, Paul was an Apostle, and had a right to speak into my life, even against my own thinking. Yes, this book of Galatians was written to address Jewish/Gentile issues. Yes, this book was inspired scripture as much as any other book of the Bible. Yes, it was written for me, to instruct me and to teach me.

As I slowly continued through the book, my heart continued to open in new ways. I began to appreciate the liberty and freedom, and the inclusiveness of the gospel (in a fuller way than ever before). Gentiles were genuinely set free from sin, brought into the commonwealth of Israel by faith in Messiah. Jews were set into a right relationship with Y'shua through His blood, just like Gentiles. The gospel was about freedom, about liberty and God's incredible love through Messiah Jesus. Two verses from Galatians that were to become favorites were 6:15 and 5:6, one a commentary on the other. "For in Messiah Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but

a new creature." "For in Messiah Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, *but faith which worketh by love.*" The new creature is not a matter of circumcision; it is about a new creature which is faith working (in the heart of the believer) by love. Hallelujah!!

As I continued to worshipfully approach this wonderful book, my heart continued to discover light where there had been darkness. I had known that anti-Semitism was an awful evil, but I began to realize that anti-Semitism has a reverse image twin. It is anti-Gentilism. It had been there in my heart. Maybe it had been hidden to me, but it had been there. It had influenced my understanding of scripture. It had influenced my attitude towards living in non-Jewish settings, and had influenced my own understanding of my Jewish background. It had surely affected my walk with Y'shua. Repenting from this spirit had become a key position before the Lord. It is surely not an accident that the Lord opened the door for me to minister in Oshkosh WI for ten years. Oshkosh is the most un-Jewish area that I have ever lived. Now, I miss Oshkosh more than I could have ever realized. Through this divine encounter with the Book of Galatians the master of the universe has been able to grow some of his incredible inclusive love and grace in this Jewish heart. It is not an accident that this article has been written as I prepare for my first trip to Israel. May the Lord never allow me move away from the wonder and freedom of His word: *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians*.

Thank you Lord, for lovingly, and kindly, banging me over the head with the book of Galatians. Continue to do so as needed.



Apologetics Section

The Resurrection - History or Theology?

In Matthew 28:11-15, the scriptures tells us that the chief priests and scribes invented the story that Jesus' disciples had stolen his body from the tomb. Other Jewish writings confirm this Jewish explanation.³ There would be no need for this invented explanation if the tomb was not empty.

It is not always easy investigating historical facts especially when there has been conflict between different groups. When conflicting groups agree on certain information, it often establishes some facts. Example, Democrats and Republicans disagree on many topics. What is factual is often hard to sort out. However, Democrats and Republicans agree that George W. Bush is president. They agree that we are fighting a war in Iraq. They agree that there is a conflict over immigration issues. So we know the following facts: George Bush is president. There is a war in Iraq. There is a conflict over immigration.

In viewing the events around Jesus' crucifixion and the accounts of his resurrection, the two opposing sides, the Jewish

leaders and the followers of Jesus all agree on one significant point. Three days after his death and burial, Jesus' tomb was empty. They give different explanations for the tomb's emptiness, but we can know with certainty: His tomb was empty three days after his death. The empty tomb is an historical fact!

There are only a few explanations as to why it was empty. A serious investigation into those explanations indicate the fallacy of all but one. The empty tomb is a enormously significant historical fact that poses the incredibly important questions on page one of this newsletter. Questions that every person should seriously and carefully consider.

Notes:

1. I am sharing three turning points in my experience with grace. They are being shared in reverse chronological order. *Part III—Insistent* appeared in the January 06 issue of *The Smiling Maven*
2. Y'shua—יֵשׁוּעַ (Hebrew) Jesus
3. Josh McDowell, [Evidence That Demands a Verdict](#) (Here's Life Publishers, Inc 1979) P. 238

Editors Note: Jesus is Alive!!

The Smiling Maven

The Smiling Maven is a bi-monthly Jewish flavored newsletter sharing God's incredible grace. There is a desire to communicate God's grace with Jews and Gentiles. There is coming a spiritual atomic bomb of that incredible grace. It is an imminent spiritual explosion soon to happen in Israel that will have a wonderfully awesome affect in Israel and all the world.

Maven is a Yiddish word that means a person with special knowledge or experience. Evidence of God's grace should be characterized by an ability to smile. The Smiling Maven newsletter is an encouragement for all of us to be smiling mavens, smiling people with special knowledge of God's amazing grace.

EditorArthur Weiner
Someone needing to Smile More

Production and Mailing Assistant.....Ruthe Weiner
Often producing more smiles than her dad.

Quality Control.....Caleb Weiner
Maintaining smiles, especially when he is playing on the computer.

Comments are always welcome. Contact us at smilingmaven@yahoo.com or at The Smiling Maven 2816 Eshcol Avenue, Zion IL 60099. Both current and previous issues of the Smiling Maven are available upon request.